



NT NICHE MARKET NEWS

UPDATE JULY07

THE PLAN

Established six months ago, the mission of Tourism NT's Niche Markets Division is to link the Territory's smaller niche experiences into commercial networks that can be promoted and sold (primarily) overseas.

We're doing this by including compelling experiences that reflect the depth and diversity within each network. These will be promoted primarily online using australiasoutback.com as the call to action. We'll reach people who are passionate about these niche experiences by working with new partners with significant reach in-market.

The first phase has focussed on creating the framework, and in the next six months we will implement marketing programs for our top five niche networks.

THE PRODUCT

Feedback from our International Managers helped prioritise the niche areas that will have the most appeal in our international markets. Our top five niche networks in development are:

- Aboriginal Art Trails
- Bird-Watching Programs
- Aboriginal Music Schools
- Environmental Conservation Programs
- Wildlife Volunteer Trips

There are a series of secondary networks also lurking lower on the radar. These include 4x4 drives, Aboriginal stories and language, hiking, kayaking, cycling, indigenous volunteer work, bush medicine and wellness, bush tucker cooking schools, Jackaroo/Jillaroo schools, astronomy, storm chasing and fishing

1. ABORIGINAL ART TRAILS

In May and June we ran a test campaign featuring Aboriginal Art Trails in Alice Springs and Arnhem Land. The campaign was online, and featured as a spotlight on UK and US front page. The call to action was australiasoutback.com/aboriginalart with the pages now part of the permanent site (within Experiences) and able to be updated and expanded on a regular basis.

This was a trial in many senses –testing keywords, links to non-tourism sites and the measurement of consumer traffic, as well as connecting non-tourism products to experienced tour operators for the first time. The campaign offered art enthusiasts opportunities to come and meet Aboriginal artists, learn about remote art centres, compare indigenous art styles and if appropriate, add to their collection by purchasing direct from communities.

Promotion was through search engine marketing with keywords clustered in different groups, with slideshows featuring artists, and links to local art organisations (DesArt, ANKAAA) and to travel programs created by local operators. Google Maps featured a range of non-tourism elements and highlighted the depth behind the Art Trails. These included town galleries, remote art centres, art-based events. Travel Programs featured a range of diverse itineraries that connected the art network in different ways including private plane trips, expedition cruises, 4WD tours, and independent drives. New products were introduced to old operators. Niche specialists worked with Tourism NT for the first time. Eight new experiences linked to network.

Initial results at the conclusion of the test show a click through rate of 5.05% (double the average of 2.25%). Though we saw over 9000 clicks, the rate of conversion was slow. More detailed analysis will follow and plans are in place to expand the Art Trail network throughout the Territory over the next three months.



2. BIRD-WATCHING PROGRAMS

The birding network will feature guides with high profiles in the twitchers world, the hero birds for which the Territory is famous, key bird-watching locations, and itineraries that show the many ways a bird-watching trip can be put together. We are working with organisations who can deliver bird-watching programs and link experts into the network. These include the Territory Wildlife Park and Alice Springs Desert Park, Charles Darwin University and NTBirdSpecialist.com

3. ABORIGINAL MUSIC SCHOOLS

The Aboriginal music network will develop short music courses and didge schools, the contemporary music programs in Aboriginal communities, local festivals (eg: Barunga, Beswick, Merrepen, Garma), with links to local bands and the Skinnyfish record label and the possible development of online audio downloads. These music experiences will initially be delivered by Charles Darwin University.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS 5. WILDLIFE PROTECTION TRIPS

These nature based networks could include a huge variety of volunteer projects on offer in the Territory. Possibilities range from tree planting in Central Australia, cleaning up beaches in Arnhem Land and finding your own fossils at Alcoota, to gecko surveys in Kakadu and crazy ant eradication at Nhulunbuy.

We're looking to see where we can introduce tour operators to organisations who are keen to work with international travellers who want to do good. Possible partners include NRETA (Desert Park/Wildlife Park), Conservation Volunteers Australia, Australian Wildlife Conservancy, NT Parks, NAILSMA (North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance)

NEXT STEPS

Operators are invited to participate in our niche campaigns in 0708. We will be looking for creative itineraries that highlight our different priority niche experiences. The first two campaigns to go live in our overseas markets later this year will be Bird-Watching Programs and the expanded Aboriginal Art Trails. The Information Briefs providing background details on these networks can be found on our corporate site: www.tourismnt.com.au.

If you'd like to be part of these niche campaigns please send expressions of interest (with suggested itinerary) by 7September 2007. The final decision on itineraries that will be featured on australiasoutback.com/birdwatching and australiasoutback.com/aboriginalart will be made by 28September 2007.

We look forward to working with you – many thanks.

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